

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

In view of the limited supply of platinum in the country and of the urgent demand for war purposes, it is requested that every doctor and dentist in the country go carefully over his instruments and pick out **EVERY SCRAP OF PLATINUM** that is not absolutely essential to his work. These scraps, however small and in whatever condition, should reach governmental sources without delay, through either accredited sources of the Red Cross or through any bank under the supervision of the Federal Reserve board. Such banks will receive and pay current prices for platinum. Do not give scrap platinum to an unauthorized agent.

According to the U. S. Public Health Service experience everywhere shows that the proportion of persons with physical impairments is considerably greater in persons between 30 and 40 than in those between 20 and 30 years of age. This waning vitality at ages over 30, so commonly accepted as inevitable, can be postponed to a large extent. In this connection, it is pointed out that 60 per cent. of the physical defects found in the last draft were of a preventable or curable nature.

The U. S. Public Health Service issues a circular entitled "Information for Guidance and Assistance of Registrants Disqualified for Active Military Service Because of Physical Defects." It is a four-page leaflet, containing specific information relating to the commoner causes of rejection or deferred classification, e. g., defective eyesight, teeth and disease, feet, underweight, overweight, hernia, hemorrhoids, varicocele, varicose veins, bladder, kidney and urinary disorders, ear trouble, heart affections, high blood pressure, lung trouble, rheumatism, venereal disease, alcohol, nervous and mental disease, and miscellaneous conditions. The information is presented in simple form and has been approved by the highest medical authorities. At the end is a striking quotation from President Wilson: "It is not an army we must shape and train for war; it is a nation." This circular may be had on request and deserves a wide circulation.

Dr. J. L. Mudd, of Merced, calls attention to the fact that in the July issue of the Journal, page 323, the number of physicians in Merced county was wrongly stated. It is a pleasure to correct the error and record that, of the twenty practicing physicians of Merced county, five, or 25 per cent. are now in service.

Your particular attention is directed to the articles appearing in the Department of Pharmacy and Chemistry by Dr. Felix Lengfeld. These critical and suggestive reviews are of real value to the busy physician who has neither time nor skill to adjudge pharmaceutical values himself, and who runs, therefore, the risk of missing something of real value, or, on the other hand, of falling into an error of ignorance.

There are unmistakable signs that various political interests and aspirants are fully alive to the vote-getting qualities of the medical profession. It is surprising how many votes are influenced or even directed by the expressed opinions of physicians. Especially is this true in California, where equal suffrage allows women a just share in government. Certain recent examples show strikingly that the civic and political influence of physicians is a powerful weapon not to be held lightly by friend or foe. Consider these points in your daily round among patients and friends.

In a recent address, F. W. Shepardson, Illinois State Director of Registration and Education, states the evident fact that there are more fakers and charlatans in medicine than in all other trades and professions combined. This condition is, after all, not improving. We are minded, by way of comment, to recall the strange fact that custom and tradition decree that the medical profession should be alone and fully responsible for purifying its own ranks, and also should be chiefly responsible for the protection of the public against the pre-named fakers and charlatans. To be sure we ought to purify our own ranks. So far as we fail in this, do we deserve censure. But, we ought not to be taxed financially or otherwise with the full burden of protecting the public against the fakers and charlatans, of whom the great majority can claim no blood relationship to the medical profession. The public is to benefit and the public should pay for the benefit, in money, time, interest, education and men. It is unjust for doctors to foot the entire bill. Let the public and not the medical profession be directly responsible for the fakers and charlatans.

FLIGHT SURGEONS.

For the care and conditioning of fliers in the air service the Government is now appointing a corps of doctors and trainers large enough to equip each training field and camp for fliers, both in the United States and in France. The doctors will be known as flight surgeons and the trainers as physical directors.

The medical branch of the air service is not alone confined to the selection of the flier but to his care and condition after he has been admitted to the service. It has become apparent that the flier is unlike other soldiers. In the air service he has become an intricate, highly sensitized piece of mechanism with troubles all his own. To keep his complex organism physically fit a special master mechanic had to be provided solely for him.

The flight surgeon, therefore, has been given freedom of independent initiative in all questions of fitness of the fliers. Subject to the approval of the commanding officer, he is expected to institute such measures as periods of rest, recreation, and temporary excuse from duty as may seem advisable. He takes sick calls of aviators; he visits such cases as may be in the hospital and consults with the attending surgeon regarding them. He makes the examination of candidates for aviation and lives in close touch with fliers.

The physical directors are assistants to the flight surgeons and their duty is to supervise such recreation and physical training of the fliers as is considered necessary.